

The P-See UrGent

<http://swipcug.apcug.org>

Newsletter of Southwestern IN Personal Computer Users Group ♦ PO Box 4336 ♦ Evansville, IN 47724-0336

THE NEW, THE BEST, and THE WORST

December 2003

*Collected by Pim Borman
SW Indiana PC Users Group, Inc*

Too Much Safety

Yes, you can have too much of a good thing, even safety. I have my new notebook computer equipped with all the safety features I consider necessary. To start with, there is **Norton Antivirus**. Then there is the **ZoneAlarm Pro** firewall which complements the hardware firewall in my **Netgear wireless router**. I use **AdAware Pro** to protect against spyware that may steal my privacy with the potential for identity theft, and that may take over my system in order to push its in-your-face ads. I have installed the **Google Toolbar** for easy Web searches, but Google also takes it upon itself to filter out pop-up ads by default. To eliminate most advertising from Web pages I use **AdSubtract PRO** that also wants to check for cookies, but at least not by default. My browser is **Internet Explorer 6** which incorpo-

rates its own protection levels against scripts, DirectX and cookies. **Outlook Express 6** by default removes attachments that in its opinion may be harmful to your system's health, including some harmless programs your friends might send you (turn that off by going to Tools ... Options Security and uncheck the option to "Do not allow attachments to be saved or opened"). I also have Outlook Express set up to show messages in text format only, not HTML that can be contaminated with worms and viruses. **Windows XP PRO** has its own firewall program, but that is turned off by default. To turn the firewall on or off go to Start...Settings...Control Panel...Network Connections. Click on the kind of connection you have, e.g. broadband or wireless, click on the advanced tab and take it from there.

All these safety programs started out with their own narrow, well-defined areas of protection. Now the features they offer are overlapping and may cause the system to slow down. What's worse, they may start to interfere with the system's operation.

After receiving my new notebook, my first action

was to perform an online Windows XP update — multiple gigabytes of downloads. Then I activated Norton Antivirus, already installed on the computer. All this time the hardware firewall in my router was the only protection against intruding miscreants until I installed ZoneAlarm PRO. Finally, I installed AdAware Pro, AdSubtract and the Google toolbar.

Several days later, a Dell program alerted me to the availability of additional critical Windows Updates. I went to the MS Update site and proceeded to download the new patches. The download halted as soon as it started, for some obscure reason, but the Update web site at least offered help in determining the problem. Since AdSubtract acts as a proxy between the computer and the Internet, Microsoft instructed me to add the names of four update programs to the AdSubtract Control Panel. Even that did not solve the problem. I finally disabled ZoneAlarm and was then able to download the update patches.

Subsequently I found that I had no longer access to my email sites at Yahoo and Ly-

cos. They both complained that I had some cookies turned off they insisted I accept. I turned the cookie control off in ZoneAlarm, but that didn't do it. Only after turning off the popup controls in ZoneAlarm and Google could I access my Yahoo and Lycos email again. It also solved the problem of downloading later Windows updates.

Because of all these shenanigans, I have disabled many features of the various programs designed to protect me. Interestingly, ZoneAlarm Pro asked me to upload the settings I am using with their program so they can better understand what the users need. They may find that many users disable large parts of the additional features added recently.

The answer may be to abandon all these individual protectors and switch to an integrated safety suite such as the new **Norton Internet Security 2004** that combines anti virus protection; a firewall with a Web assistant that blocks ads and gives access to other program options in MS internet Explorer, as well as a Network Detector that allows different firewall options for different networks; privacy control that prevents confidential information to be sent out in email, instant messages, attachments and Web forms; AntiSpam in pop3-compliant email, integrated with Microsoft Outlook, Outlook Express and Eudora; and parental control options with different privileges for individual users.

List price is \$69.95, but if you already own any Norton or Symantec software, you can get the upgrade version for \$39.95. It is likely that you can find an even better deal in local electronics or stationery stores. Also, Norton has learned over the years how to make their programs easy to use and understand. I may give them a try before long, as soon as my current anti virus subscription expires. The bad news is that the 2004 version now includes a product activation procedure "to ensure authenticity." That means you can use it only on a single computer and you need to buy extra copies if you want to protect other computers.

Bits and Pieces

If you own more than one computer but mostly use only one of them to access the Internet, you can still protect the other systems with a free, and highly recommended, anti virus program called AVG. It is easy to use and provides weekly updates that automatically install. It can be downloaded from http://www.grisoft.com/us/us_index.php.

I happened to notice a handy feature in my new MS Word 2002 version. If you are at all familiar with previous Word versions you probably know that you can access the spell-checker with F7 and the thesaurus with Shift-F7. But by right clicking on a word, you get a dropdown menu that includes not only formatting choices but also immediate access to synonyms, includ-

ing the thesaurus. It also provides a link to translations of the word in various foreign languages, provided you have installed the dictionaries for those languages. Checking back, I find that Word 2000 has the same features, except for the translation option.

Dell continues to be one of the leading providers of high quality, state-of-the-art computers at reasonable cost, but nobody is perfect. I just heard that Dell is going to do away with the infamous foreign tech support operations with technicians that are hard to understand; only for commercial customers, however.

My personal peeve with Dell is that they load their systems with all kinds of unwanted software. In my new notebook computer I was at least offered the choice between Norton and McAfee anti virus software (the latter is the default), but I also found software to subscribe to AOL, Earthlink, MS Hotmail as well as time-limited trial versions of programs such as Paint Shop 7 and Dell Picture Studio – Dell Image Expert. By the time I had removed most of the unwanted junk my hard drive needed to be defragmented. Dell also insists on adding help information to that provided by Windows. In my experience, the added information is of little value.

As long as I have had my Sigecom Internet cable connection (3 years?) I have been paying a monthly rental fee of \$8.00 for the cable modem. I recently learned that you can now buy a cable modem from Sigecom and have it installed for a total fee of \$65 — clearly a much better deal. Shortly after I ordered the new modem the old Nortell box went on the blink so its replacement with a sleek new WebStar unit came just in time.

MINUTES of NOVEMBER 16th MEETING

Due to a sudden severe illness, Jim Derk was unable to provide the program for the November meeting. Hopefully, he will be able to meet with us at some time early in 2004. A room filled with members and two guests entertained and educated themselves with lamentations and discussions about current problems with personal computers. Jim Geiser opened the program with an offer to present a donated printer to whosoever may need one. Larry Trapp offered to take it home. The roll was taken with an invitation for each person to tell, "What bugs you about computers"? Jim Geiser and Harold Sunn both described problems with their PC shutting down for no apparent reason while in operation.

Terry McCrary experiences all sorts of weird things including shut down. He just restarts and continues work. He also described a free program that defrags RAM in 40% of the time.

Keith Hemingway told of shut down problems and update problems with WIN 98 and a Norton product.

Don Cureton told of startup problems and he experiences frequent "pings" with Zone Alarm.

Duane Morrow experiences slow down when SIGECOM circuit is busy.

Pim suggested that he reboot the MODEM by unplugging it for a few seconds.

Pim Borman's problems involved his safety consciousness with a router, firewall, Norton AntiVirus, Ad-aware, Zone Alarm, etc. Now he can't access sites that need cookies. He had to turn off Zone Alarm to do updates.

Gordon Kelley and Ruth Hadley both described problems with a window saying that a program had committed an illegal operation.

Dennis Scherrer described dial up network connections that don't work.

Clara Kress upgraded Norton and now gets illegal operation notice when playing Free Cell. Maury Keller told of error messages appearing but they go away.

Mike Abaray said the library must run a variety of programs on a lot of computers.

Susan Reynolds got an I/O Magic external CD burner that wouldn't work with her older machine. It was suggested that

she defrag and try a slower write speed.

Cynthia and Kenny Mossberg use agricultural software and miss getting manuals to guide the operations.

Jim DeRudder says funny things were happening until he replaced the power supply in his computer. Now it works fine.

The meeting concluded with a "For the Good of the Order" session that revealed more concerns. Pim has a new laptop with a 1400 x 1050 screen. When playing Pinball he must lower the screen resolution. Harold Sunn's new version of Scrabble is even worse and won't run at all. Keith Hemingway observed that many older games would not play on newer machines. He suggests getting X Box or Play Station for games.

Bettie Cook stated that Evansville On Line's e-mail program had "Filtered Messages" held in EOL's mail program online that takes the allotted user storage space.

Jim DeRudder reported that when he is looking at a web site for The New York Times an ad comes up in the middle of the article. Pim suggested that he try a free program called Ad-Subtract which acts as a proxy.

Jim Marsh told of a GPS program for PDAs available at Radio Shack.

Terry McCrary has a GPS for his laptop that talks. It tells the user how to navigate to a given destination.

The proposed slate of officers for 2004 is President Jim Geiser, Vice President Don Cureton, Secretary John Powell,

and Treasurer Ruth Hadley. Alternate candidates can be submitted until the election at the next meeting on December 14.

Respectfully submitted,
John Powell, Secretary
Aided and abetted by
Kay Anne Peake

Configuration of My NewPC

*By Larry Trapp - Webmaster
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Well, I broke down and built up the courage to update my Dell T-600 with a new PC. I chose a Quiet-Light Pentium 4, Intel 865PE, 800FSB Firewire 1394, S-ATA-RAID, 100Mbit Ethernet by Polywell. You can locate a facsimile of my new PC online at: <http://www.polywell.com/us/desktop/poly865rf.asp>.

I wanted a 2.8-GHz Pentium 4, 1GB DDR SDRAM, two 120GB RAID-1 hard drives, Dual Formatted DVD, LCD Monitor with at least 6 USB and 2 Fire Wire ports. I also wanted at least 3 open PCI slots. My reason for ordering this configuration of a PC was security. I need all the security I can get for the 270+ page website I created from scratch 5 years ago. I have an ostomy, and I have been a member of the local United Ostomy Association Chapter for 12 years. You can find our chapter's website at: <http://www.ostomy.evansville.net>

I discovered several highly ranked PCs via PC Magazine over the last 3-4 years. I read about each PC maker separately then when it got down to making my decision I chose between the Dell 8300 and the Polywell 865RF. I started off by pricing the Dell 8300. I talked to three different technicians and only one of these three technicians seemed knowledgeable enough to suit me. He listened to me rather closely and then he e-mailed me a configuration of the PC I suggested with the price list of each component and total cost. I got on the phone and talked to the technician/ salesman for the second time. I forwarded him the offer I got from Dell. He noticed several things that were not configured efficiently and components that were falsely represented. Then the salesman/technician from Polywell e-mailed me a counter offer.

I got back in touch with the Dell Salesman and he tried to slough-off the mix-up on the single formatted DVD burner he tried to sell me. He also tried to slough off the XP Home Edition Operating System he took for granted that I wanted. Anyway, by this time I had enough. I got back with the Salesman/ technician with Polywell and questioned a Hard Drive Configuration he tried to sell me and he admitted he had made a mistake and sold me a better Hard Drive that was configured more efficiently for the same price. I also asked him about the price of the 21 inch LCD monitor he tried to sell me

and I found out the night before that I could buy that particular monitor at Best Buy for \$300.00 less. He said, "man you done yourself a favor because you physically went to the store to see the 21 inch LCD monitor you wanted." He said that no one should buy a monitor of that caliber sight unseen. At least he was honest to admit this to me. Finally, I asked the Polywell Technician/Salesman if he would partition the hard drive for me and he said "that is not a problem." He sent me the final offer with a break down on price and I verified it and faxed him my MC number and the deal was consummated. By the way, the Polywell Technician/Salesman also agreed to taking the two 120 GB Hard Drives from different batches. (Somebody made this suggestion to me but I forget off hand who it was.)

Well, I am listing the various component of my new PC below:

Configuration:

- ♦MBP4-865VL13PE 1
Poly865RF 800FSB P4
8XAGP,1394, LAN, SATA-RAID, 5.1
- ♦CPIP4E2.8 1 Intel Pentium-4C Processor 2.8GHz 800FSB 512K HT
- ♦MEDD40-512 2 DDR 400MHz 512MB PC3200 Memory Unbuffered
- ♦CSTX10-A962W 1 Platinum 10Bay Aluminum Mid-Tower w/400W PS+1394
- ♦HDSA120ST1 2 Seagate SATA 120G 7200RPM HD 8M Cache
- ♦FD14T 1 Teac 1.44MB 3.5" Floppy Drive

- ♦DCE-0NBOARD 1 On-board RAID-0 or 1 ATA Controller
- ♦KB104M-NATUK49 1 Microsoft MultiMedia Keyboard PS/2 (OEM)
- ♦MOMPS-INTE/EXPL 1 MS Intelligent Explorer Opti Mouse (OEM)
- ♦CDDVD-TOS/1802 1 Toshiba 16X DVD ROM EIDE Drive
- ♦CDDVDRS-DRU510A 1 Sony DVD+RW/-R DVD-RW/-R 4.7G CDRW DRU510A
- ♦MSSB-ONBOARD 1 On-board Standard PCI Audio Sound
- ♦GAAN-GFT5600 1 Nvidia GeForceFX 5600 128M 8X AGP DVI+VGA+TVout
- ♦MD56IFM-V92-F40 1 Lucent OEM 56K V.92 PCI Fax/Modem/Voice
- ♦NAEE-ONBOARD 1 On-Board 10/100Mbit Ethernet
- ♦OSWXP-PRO 1 Windows XP Professional CD+License
- ♦SA24TS/OSS1Y 1 1yr IAI Third Party On-Site Service
- ♦SAEXTWARR5/3 1 5yr Labor, 3yr Ltd-part warranty
- ♦SAMBS-MODUL/AXP 1 User Manual, Assembly, Packaging

May Your Holidays Be Filled With Polygons

By Timothy Everingham, TUGNET
teveringham@acm.org

Again it is getting cooler; Fall is here and the holiday season is

just around the corner. While many look forward to "chestnuts roasting on an open fire," too many of us are dreaming of polygons. Yes, it is the time for the largest release of games for computers and video consoles of the entire year.

This year we have gotten to the point of cinematic quality in games. Games like Vivendi Universal's *Half Life 2* and Electronic Arts' *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* are up to the standards of what one would expect in an animated movie. Some games' artificial intelligence units which control the adversary units are improving so that after a while the adversary will pick up on the players tactics and make adjustments, which then requires the players to change their tactics. However, some games continue to remain dumb so your enemies don't even know you are there unless you hit them over the head with something.

Games based on movies or TV shows continue to be generally bad; but there are some exceptions, like Electronic Arts' *James Bond* series of games. One trend concerning such games is that some of those games are directed toward the general population rather than toward the hard core gamer. This has lead to some games having bad reviews by the hard core gaming press and hard core gamers. But because non-hard core gamers enjoy these games they wind up as a best seller. Examples of these are Atari's *Enter The Matrix* and

Electronic Arts' *Harry Potter and The Sorcerer's Stone*.

In the game console wars, Nintendo seems to be losing. Twice this year Nintendo had to do a special promotion bundling when the GameCubes sales went significantly lower than Microsoft's Xbox. Over the last two years Nintendo has had many companies that exclusively developed for their platform start developing games for other platforms as well. This year two well-known game publishers decided to discontinue publishing games for the GameCube. In addition, Sony Playstation 2 games are reported to be about 70% of the console games sold. Sony and Microsoft built their consoles with the concept of it not being just a console, but a home entertainment device. They also had plans for online gaming. Nintendo did not on both counts, which has hurt them. The next generation of consoles are expected to arrive 2005-2006, and the results may be a live or die situation for Nintendo as a console manufacturer.

For those who have recently bought or upgraded PCs with good graphic cards and CPUs and want to show them off with some great games Vivendi Universal Games' *Half Life 2*, Electronic Arts' *The Lord of the Rings: Return of the King*, and JoWood's *AquiNox 2: Revelation* are games you should consider. *The Lord of the Rings: Return of The King* will be on the consoles too.

Some good WWII action titles are Electronic Arts' *Medal of Honor: Rising Sun* for the consoles (PC version later on) and for the PC Activision's *Call To Duty*. Electronic Arts has again brought out another of its excellent James Bond series, *James Bond Everything or Nothing* (consoles only for now). Ubisoft's *Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time* (PS2) and Tom Clancy's *Ghost Recon: Island Thunder* (Xbox) are definitely worth your consideration. For you fans of Electronic Arts' *Battlefield 1942* (PC) there are the *Secret Weapons of WWII* and *Road to Rome* expansion packs. The release date for Microsoft's *Halo 2* (Xbox) is March 2004, but the first version of this excellent first person shooter has now been released for the PC. Ubisoft's *Beyond Good & Evil* (PC & consoles) gives a unique mixing of game genres to provide an excellent action adventure. If you like survival horror games, try Kononomi's *Silent Hill 3* for the PS2.

For those who like more thoughtful games look at Microsoft's *Rise of Nations* real-time strategy game (PC). Electronic Arts has an expansion pack for its *RTS Command and Conquer Generals*, *Command & Conquer Generals Zero Hour*. If you are a fan of the Sims, there is the *Making Magic* expansion pack where spells can produce love or turn someone into a frog. Microsoft's *Flight Simulator 2004: A Century of Flight* (PC) is another title you should look at. For aerial combat look at Microsoft's *Crimson Skies*:

High Road to Revenge (Xbox) and Lucas Arts' *Secret Weapons Over Normandy* (PC, PS2, & Xbox). For you *Star Wars* fans there is Lucas Arts' *Star Wars: The Clone Wars* (Xbox).

For the sports fans for football game you should look for *Madden NFL 2004* from Electronic Arts (PC & all consoles), which fits the general rule that Electronic Arts either has the best sports game or tied for first. As with all of Electronic Arts sports titles, only the Playstation 2 version is playable online.

Microsoft's *Midtown Madness 3* (Xbox) is a racing through traffic game. For a fighting game there is Namco's *Soul Caliber II* (all consoles). If you like shooting things up with your racing try Midway's *Spy Hunter 2* (all consoles). Then there are games for those who don't want to follow the rules. Sony's *Downhill Domination* (PS2) is an off road outlaw bicycle racing game. Then as a follow up to their successful *Outlaw Golf*, Simon & Schuster Interactive has come up with *Outlaw Volleyball* (Xbox). Of course for those who really want to go outlaw, Rockstar Games' *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City* is now available for the PC.

If you are looking for a massively multiplayer online game, Sony Online Entertainment's *Planetside* (PC) is a breakthrough on game play and realtime graphics. SOE has also come out with an "All Access" subscription where

you can play all their MMOG for \$21.95 a month.

A joint venture with Lucas Arts, *Star Wars Galaxies: An Empire Divided* (PC) got off to a slow start, but many of the bugs have been fixed and it is becoming quite popular. Square Enix's *Final Fantasy Online XI* also looks good (PC & PS2). For many of you there will be polygon this holiday coming through your game platform. In many cases games are getting better, but some think they can get away with doing more marketing and tying to films or TV shows to overcome bad game design. So check the reviews and your friends to know where to best put your cash. If you are really in a quandary, you can always rent them first at your local video store. Play with respect and destroy the alien before it eats you.

Timothy Everingham is CEO of Timothy Everingham Consulting in Azusa, California. He is also Vice Chair of the Los Angeles Chapter of ACM SIGGRAPH, the largest chapter of the Association for Computing Machinery's (ACM) Special Interest Group on Computer Graphics and Interactive Techniques and one of Southern California's significant professional organizations within the entertainment and media industries. Further information can be found at <http://home.earthlink.net/~teveringham> The Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you.

WEB WANDERINGS

*By Gil Smith
Copied from CCCC, Central Computer Club, Santa Maria CA.*

ASK OXFORD

Are you passionate about language? Well so are the publishers of Ask Oxford. You can get a lot out of this site. Like what, you ask? Well there is a Word of the Day section, Games, Quotations, and an Ask the Experts section. For those of you who like odd trivia, you'll enjoy the section that gives you the history of a word and where it originated. There is even a Question and Answer section for those of you who have deep probing language questions.
<http://www.askoxford.com>

WHAT IS?

Have you ever been curious - what those IT people are talking about? Well here is a site that has thousands of definitions for the latest IT-related words. Just pop it in their search engine and get your definition, or better yet browse by letter, or topic. Believe me if you can think of the word, they probably have the definition you are looking for. Here's an example: Lazy loading: is also known as dynamic function loading, is a mode that allows a developer to specify what components of a program should not be loaded into storage by default when a program is started. Ordinarily, the system loader automatically loads the program its dependent components at the same time. In lazy loading,

dependents are only loaded as they are specifically requested. Lazy loading can be used to improve the performance of a program if most of the dependent components are never actually used. Isn't that more helpful than being told that it's dynamic function is loading?
<http://whatis.techtargt.com/>



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ON OUR WEB SITE

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In the **WORM HOLE** read Computer Don's advice on Helping to Control Spam with Outlook Express 'Message Rules'; how the known hoax about the JDBGMR.EXE file is now being used to spread a worm; Audacity, a free, new audio editor; and RoboForm 4.3.7, a free program that deftly automates one of the more annoying tasks surfers face: filling out Web-based forms. The **HUMOR** section has contributions from SWIPCUG member John Powell and several more from my old friend in Venezuela, Kees Vuurman, who is suffering under the political unrest there. We have new **PHOTOS** of the November meeting with the help of Terry McCrerey. You can read about the **NEXT MEETING** before you receive the next newsletter. Visit the **NEWSLETTERS** section to read previous electronic editions of the P-See Urgent. The online editions do not contain graphics, to reduce file size for faster downloading. **AREA LINKS** has links to member Web sites as well as other local sites of interest.

Please send questions, comments, and especially material to Pim Borman, your Web site editor, at swipcug@sigecom.net. Please note that this is a new email address, since the previous one is being overrun with spam.

DECEMBER 12th MEETING

Election of Officers

***Program: WebFeat, My Millennium,
eebooks: Three new products at the
Evansville Vanderburgh Public Library***

Speaker, Mike Abaray, Associate Director of
Support Services of Evansville Public Library
System

**5th & Locust Street
2ed Floor Auditorium**

2PM - 4PM

Guests & Members Welcome!